



for the greatest good

blue mountains FOREST RESILIENCY PROJECT

BLUE MOUNTAINS RESTORATION STRATEGY | OCTOBER 2015

Contacts: Ayn Shlisky, Team Leader (541) 278-3762 | Darcy Weseman, Public Affairs (541) 278-3755

the broadscale assessment: informing the proposed action

"Without an understanding of regional scale restoration needs it is difficult to accurately quantify the magnitude of ecological and planning needs. Evaluation of restoration needs requires a perspective larger than individual watersheds or even individual forests and (one) that considers forested lands across all ownerships within a region." - Haugo et al. 2014



The Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy team is currently conducting an all lands broadscale assessment of forest conditions and management opportunities across the Blue Mountains ecoregion. This analysis will use scientific data to show priority areas for restoration treatments, which can then be incorporated into treatment designs across the Blue Mountains. By identifying restoration needs at the landscape level, the team can design ecologically appropriate treatments, which will then be used to develop the proposed action for the forest resiliency project.

This approach is designed to provide a cohesive story across the Blue Mountains of the magnitude of restoration needs on all lands. Additionally, the broadscale assessment will provide a framework for the Forests to determine where potential priorities exist. This framework can then be used for multi-partner planning, implementation, and funding of landscape scale restoration.

Forest resiliency is characterized by the ability of a forest to recover following disturbances, including wildfires, insects and disease, and climate change.

integration of the broadscale assessment

The intent of the broadscale assessment is to integrate three focus areas (forest restoration needs, wildland fire risk, and climate change) to develop a picture of forest resilience at the Blue Mountains ecoregion scale. Because the three focus areas each play a critical role in forest resiliency, this integrated approach will help determine where forested lands have the greatest restoration need, based on a scientific understanding of future conditions. By integrating the assessment around these three focus areas, the team can identify priority treatment areas across the landscape, concentrating on where active forest management (thinning and managed fire) will contribute the most to forest resiliency.

Forest Restoration Needs

Current forest growth is outpacing active forest management. The forest restoration needs analysis compares the current condition on the landscape to the desired future condition of *more on page 2.....*

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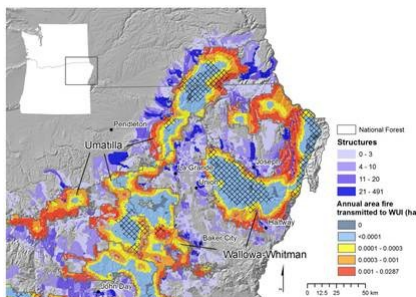
benefits of the forest resiliency project

- Greater forest and community resiliency to fire
- Increased amount of open canopied, and large tree/old forests
- Reduced incidences of large pulses of smoke from uncharacteristically severe fires
- A broadscale integrated analysis of where active forest management (thinning and managed fire) will contribute the most to forest resiliency
- Improved wildfire management decision-making, incorporating scientific analyses of areas where fire will have desirable versus unwanted effects
- Jobs and supplemental economic benefits to local communities
- Resilient forest habitat for high value resources, such as fish, wildlife, native plant species, water quality, air quality and protected tribal treaty resources
- Scientifically consistent data and analyses that can be used in other National Forest project plans, or to support multi-partner planning, implementation, and funding of landscape scale restoration with adjacent landowners

integration of the broadscale assessment *continued.....*

the Blue Mountains National Forests based on structure, composition, density, pattern and disturbance. This analysis identifies areas that are the most departed from desired forest conditions. This can be used to determine where thinning and fire can be used to actively restore forested landscapes toward more resilient conditions.

Wildland Fire Risk



Analysis from Ager et al (In Press)

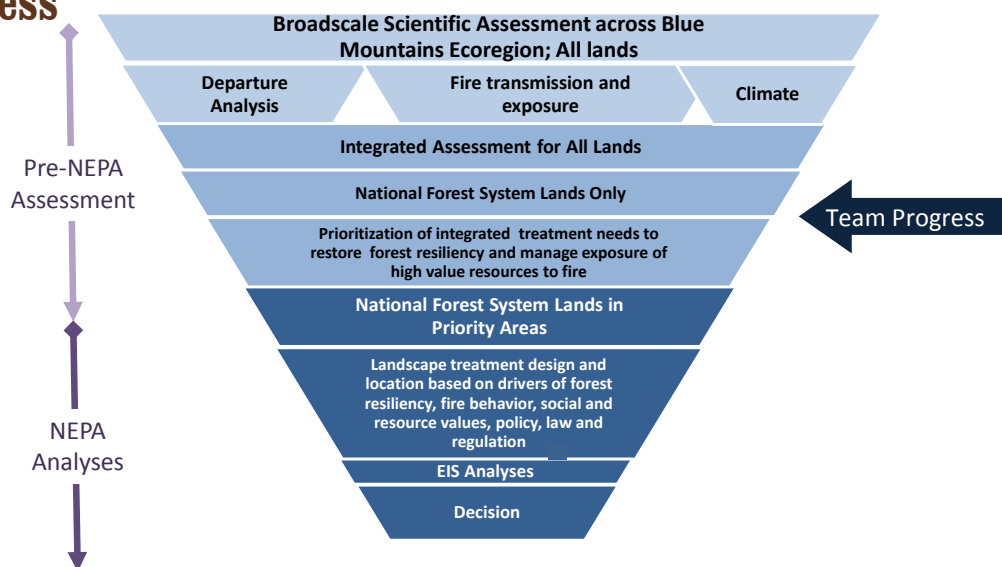
While some fires are beneficial for fire-adapted ecosystems, unusually large and severe wildfires have become more and more common in forests across the west. The team is looking at how fire moves across the landscape with respect to highly valued resources (for example communities at risk, tribal resources, existing old forest, closed forest wildlife habitat etc.). The wildfire risk analysis will help identify strategic

locations for fuel treatments to modify fire behavior potential. These fuel treatments can be used to support safe and effective, large scale wildfire, prescribed fire management, and protection of high valued resources.

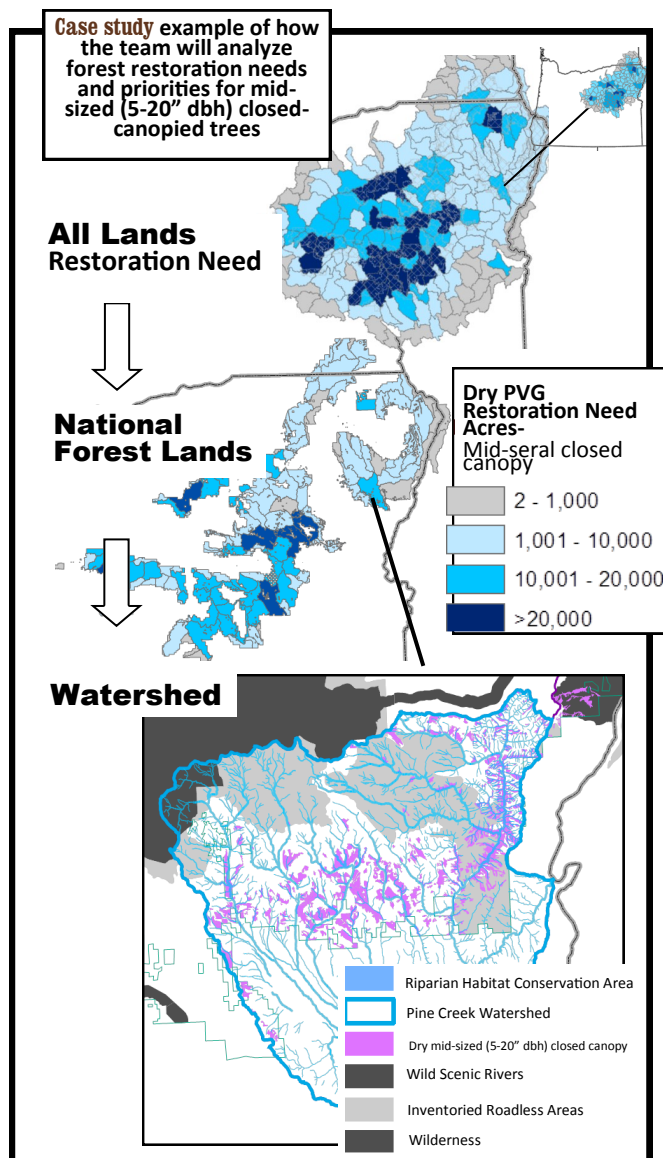
Influence of Climate Change

Climate across the Blue Mountains is changing, and these changes influence local ecosystems and their role in human communities. Current trends in climate are leading to prolonged late season drought, changes in forested vegetation distribution and patterns and increased fire season length (and the size of areas burned). The climate change analysis will identify areas that are most at risk, given the interaction of climate change, departed forest and habitat conditions, and disturbance.

blue mountains forest resiliency analysis process



Look for information on the proposed action in next month's issue!



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/bluemountainsforestresiliency>



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